

MINUTES
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Holiday Inn Lansing South
6820 South Cedar Street
Lansing, Michigan
August 10, 2005

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 10, 2005 in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair
Jason Dinsmore

Staff Present:

Steve Kubisiak, Recreation and Trails Program Coordinator, Lansing
Lee Standard, Law Enforcement, Lansing
Richard Kennedy, Motorized Programs, Lansing
Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Jim Radabaugh, State Trail Coordinator, Lansing
Kathleen Campbell FMFM, Cadillac
Paige Perry FMFM, Gaylord
Wayne Wheeler FMFM, Newberry
Pete LundBorg, Parks and Recreation Bureau, Silver Lake State Park

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac
Ken Arbogast, Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Mr. Ranney reported Marlie Dielman has tendered her resignation. **Mr. Kubisiak** noted there are four vacancies. The DNR is currently reviewing potential candidates and intends to make appointments before the next meeting. **Mr. Radabaugh** said that if anyone is interested in being considered for a position on the board to submit a letter of intent and a short biography to Mr. Kubisiak by the end of the month.

Minutes

Acknowledged Minutes of the February 9, 2005. No action taken due to lack of a quorum.

Mr. Ranney said he provided comments to Law Enforcement Division regarding the new Handbook of Off-Road Vehicle Laws. He recommended motorcycle information be included in the next printing. The new handbook is posted on the Department website at www.michigan.gov/dnr. (Click on *Recreation and Camping* then *ORV/ATV*).

Forest Certification Audit Findings – Ms. Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest, Mineral and Fire

Management summarized the DNR's current forest certification effort. She noted the auditor's have cited illegal ORV damage as a significant problem that could jeopardize the DNR's ability to certify Michigan's State Forest. Help from trail enthusiasts is needed. Work instructions have been developed to provide guidance to field staff to address audit findings. The final audit is expected to be complete the last week of September. The DNR will provide an update at the November meeting.

Mr. Ranney asked if the DNR could publicize the issue and offered to assist with getting the word out to the public through publications and websites.

Ms. Boyd said a copy of the work instructions will be provided to the board for distribution to trail organizations so they understand what staff will be doing. Details regarding the forest certification program and work instructions are posted on the DNR web site at www.michigan.gov/dnr. (Click on *Forests, Land & Water* then *Forest Management*, and then *Forest Certification*.)

Mr. Ranney thanked Ms. Boyd.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Plan – **Ms. Boyd** announced the public will have multiple opportunities to comment on the draft plan. The draft is also going through an internal review.

Mr. Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management summarized the planning process. Tomorrow will begin the first of two thirty day public comment periods. Public comments on the initial draft will be received until midnight September 12, 2005. A final draft will be prepared based on comments and will be taken back to the ORV board in November. The final draft will be submitted to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) for information in December with another 30 day public comment period. The final plan will be taken to the NRC in February 2006 for action.

Dr. Chuck Nelson, Associate Professor, Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies, Michigan State University presented a power-point presentation summarizing the draft ORV plan. He highlighted the DNR's mission, key issues, and action recommendations.

Chairman Ranney thanked Dr. Nelson and encouraged the public to comment on the draft plan.

Mr. Kubisiak, Recreation and Trails Program Coordinator reported that a press-release will be made tomorrow (August 11, 2005) and the draft plan, executive summary, and tonight's power point presentation will be posted on the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/dnr. (Click on *Recreation & Camping* then *ORV/ATV*).

Safety Education Program Workgroup Update – **Mr. Ranney** reported the workgroup met five times with two more meetings planned for September. He recommended updating the ORV video as part of the training curriculum. He is supportive of hands-on training. He discussed the potential need for a fee increase, with \$3 dollars to support a hands-on training program. He recommended training providers be reimbursed \$20 dollars per student for classroom only training, and \$60 per student for hands-on training, with no charge to the student.

Mr. Kubisiak clarified the focus of the workgroup is to develop the curriculum for the training program.

Lee Standard, Law Enforcement Division said the workgroup is operating in an advisory capacity and the last meeting was very productive. He thanked the workgroup.

Mr. Ranney thanked the workgroup participants and recognized Katie Campbell, Thomas Dunn, Bill Gilbert, Rodney Hunt, Bill Chapin, Richard Rondeau, Roger Smith, Marc Smith, Dan Toth, Royce Wood, Brian Yinger, Creig Grey, Scott Berg, Pete Lundborg, and Steve Kubisiak.

NEW BUSINESS

Senate Bill 278 -- **Mr. Ranney** reported SB 278 has been introduced to maintain the current statutory formula for distribution of the ORV Trail Improvement Fund and support additional money for law

enforcement. It increases the appropriation for ORV trail development, restoration and enforcement grants and requires the Department to submit a plan to increase the mileage of ORV trails by 25% over 4 years.

ORV License Fee – **Mr. Ranney** stated ORV license fees have not been raised since 1995 and that it's time to review the fee structure. He proposed increasing the fee to \$25.50, with 50 cents going to the license agents, \$3.00 earmarked for safety education, and the remainder spread according to current formula for distribution of the ORV Trail Improvement Fund. He believes trail riding organizations would be supportive of a fee increase. Discussion ensued.

Economic Impact Study – **Mr. Ranney** recognized the importance of the ORV program and the economic impacts it has on tourism and local economies. The last economic impact study was done in 1999 and he suggested a new economic study is needed because of increased use.

STAFF REPORTS

Pete Lundborg, Silver Lake State Park, Mears announced that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the off-road vehicle area at Silver Lake State Park. To celebrate, the park distributed free commemorative flags. Mr. Lundborg is the Park Manager at Silver Lake State Park and has worked for the DNR for 27 years. **Mr. Ranney** thanked Mr. Lundborg.

Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest reported that the Baldwin Ranger District is pleased to announce the re-routes and restoration efforts at the Horseshoe-Holton motorcycle trail have been very successful. The Forest Service is monitoring the situation and has received many compliments from the public.

Wayne Wheeler, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, Newberry reported ongoing problems with illegal ORV damage along the Lake Superior shoreline in Luce County. Beach grass plantings that were part of previous restoration efforts have been damaged. He reported conservation officers have made arrests, but the local prosecutor threw out the tickets. Additional restoration and enforcement efforts are planned.

Paige Perry, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, Gaylord reported the local conservation officers believe the general public is ignorant of ORV laws and a better job of education is needed. Public service announcements were recommended.

Glenn Moll said he thinks public service announcements are a great idea. He believes it is incumbent upon the government to manage and enforce state laws or ban the activity. He said the DNR needs to do a better job of informing the public.

Mr. Kubisiak asked the board members and field staff to send him their ideas for public service announcements.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Tom Craig, ATV Off-Road Club of Michigan, Warren asked questions about the costs for the safety training class. He is supportive of training for all riders. He thinks public service announcements are a good idea and suggested radio and television advertisements.

Paul Mulder, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association, Harrison said that ORV caused environmental damage needs verification. He cited the canoe camps along the Muskegon River and does not believe the damage was caused by ORVs. He noted that the Leota ORV trailhead is plowed

in the winter and open year-around. He supports safety education and believes parents have a large responsibility and cited the driver training program as an example.

Tim Strader, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association, Sault Ste Marie asked questions about ORV license sales statistics and requested a copy of the ORV video.

Dana Smith, ATV Off-Road Club, Grass Lake is concerned about an ORV license fee increase and thought a \$5 increase may be acceptable. He believes trail restrictions and law enforcement have driven people into areas where ORV operation is prohibited. He is supportive of more riding areas and suggested opening forest roads, county roads, and southern Michigan Recreation Areas.

Bill Gilbert, Michigan ATV Safety Association (MASA) expressed concerns with some of the recommendations concerning the safety education program. He supports hands-on training and does not support class room only. He expressed concerns about illegal ORV damage and law enforcement and thinks the relationship between the DNR and user groups is at a all time low.

John Stears, Vicksburg, said he has applied for a position on the ORV Trails Advisory Board. He is critical of the board's representation and believes board members should have their contact information posted on the DNR website.

Jason Dinsmore said he can be contacted @ 517-373-1041 or jdinsmore@mucc.org

Mr. Radabaugh noted there are inconsistencies in contact information for many of the DNR boards, commissions and advisory committees. The DNR is developing consistent standards and this will be applied to all the Department's committees.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Next Meeting

November 9, 2005, Lansing Holiday Inn-South, 6820 South Cedar Street, Lansing, Michigan.

Public Present:

Tom Craig, ATV Off-Road Club of Michigan
Dana Smith, ATV Off-Road Club of
Michigan, Grass Lake
Chuck Smith ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Bill Gilbert, Michigan ATV Safety
Association
Tim Strader, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive
Association, Sault Ste Marie
John Stears, Vicksburg
Bill Chapin, Cycle Conservation Club of
Michigan (CCC)
Bruce H. Suydam, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
& CCC

Tom Gallagher, Michigan Recreation
Vehicle Riders Association
Pat Kinne, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive
Association (GLFWDA)
Paul Milder, GLFWDA
Thomas Dunn, American Motorcycle
Association (AMA), District 14
Larry Wood, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Tim Thurman, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Robert Freed, ATV Off-Road Club of MI
Kevin Drnach, ATV Off-Road Club of MI